

# MURDER AND NONNEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER

## DEFINITION

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, as defined in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, is the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another.

The classification of this offense, as for all other Crime Index offenses, is based solely on police investigation as opposed to the determination of a court, medical examiner, coroner, jury, or other judicial body. Not included in the count for this offense classification are deaths caused by negligence, suicide, or accident; justifiable homicides; and attempts to murder or assaults to murder, which are scored as aggravated assaults.

TREND		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1997	18,208	6.8
1998	16,914	6.3
Percent change	-7.1	-7.4

An estimated total of 16,914 persons were victims of murder in the United States during the year 1998. That figure represents a 7-percent decrease in comparison to the estimated number of murders in 1997 and a decline of 28 percent in comparison to the 1994 figure. In comparison to the 1989 estimate, there has been a decline of 21 percent in the number of murders nationwide. (See Table 1.)

Murder volume in the Nation's cities fell by 9 percent when compared with the volume for 1997. Cities with populations of 250,000 and over experienced an 11-percent decline in murder. Decreases in murder volume were also measured at 10 percent in cities with populations of 100,000 to 249,999; 8 percent in cities with populations of 25,000 to 49,999; and 7 percent for both cities with populations of 50,000 to 99,999 and those with populations under 10,000. The only increase in murder volume, 4 percent, was recorded in cities with populations of 10,000 to 24,999. Declines of less than 1 percent in suburban counties and 4 percent in rural counties were also recorded.

Regionally, 44 percent of murders were recorded in the Southern States, the most heavily populated area of the country. The Western and Midwestern States accounted for 22 and 21 percent, respectively; and the Northeastern States accounted for the lowest percentage of murders, 13 percent. The number of murders fell in all four regions from 1997 to 1998. The Northeastern States recorded the greatest decline, 10 percent; the Western States followed closely, experiencing a drop of 9 percent. Decreases of 6 percent were recorded in both the South and the Midwest. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

Monthly volume data indicate that murder was committed most frequently in August and least frequently in February.

Table 2.3

#### Murder by Month

Percent distribution, 1994-1998

Months	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
January	8.2	8.3	8.7	8.7	9.1
February	7.5	6.8	7.8	7.3	7.2
March	8.8	7.6	7.5	8.5	8.3
April	8.1	8.4	7.5	7.6	7.7
May	8.2	7.9	8.3	7.9	8.4
June	8.3	8.2	8.8	8.7	8.4
July	9.0	8.9	8.8	9.0	8.7
August	9.1	9.9	9.1	8.7	9.2
September	8.2	8.6	8.1	8.2	8.2
October	8.4	8.8	8.5	8.6	8.2
November	7.8	8.0	8.0	8.2	7.6
December	8.4	8.6	8.9	8.6	8.9

#### Rate

In 1998, the lowest national murder rate since 1967 was recorded—6 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. That rate represents a 7-percent drop from the 1997 figure. Trends for 5- and 10-years indicate that the 1998 rate was 30

percent lower than in 1994 and 28 percent lower than in 1989.

By region, an average of 8 murders per 100,000 inhabitants were registered in the South. The West and the Midwest each reported a rate of 6 per 100,000 in population, and the Northeast recorded the lowest rate of 4 per 100,000 inhabitants. All four of the geographic areas experienced decreases in murder rates when compared with 1997 figures. Both the Northeast and the West recorded declines of 10 percent. Smaller declines of 7 percent were reported in both the South and the Midwest. (See Table 4.)

The 1998 murder rate for the Nation's metropolitan areas was reported at 7 victims per 100,000 inhabitants. Rural counties recorded murder rates of 5 victims per 100,000 inhabitants, just slightly higher than the 4 victims per 100,000 inhabitants reported in cities outside metropolitan areas.

#### Nature

Of the estimated 16,914 murders in 1998, supplemental data were provided for 14,088. Submitted on a monthly basis by contributing agencies, these supplemental data provide the age, sex, and race of both victims and offenders; the types of weapons used; the relationships of the victims to the offenders; and the circumstances surrounding murders.

Table 2.4

#### Murder Victims

by Race and Sex, 1998

	Total	Sex of Victims		
		Male	Female	Unknown
Total White Victims	6,931	4,918	2,013	—
Total Black Victims	6,619	5,365	1,254	—
Total Other Race Victims	325	217	107	1
Total Unknown Race	213	106	45	62
Total Victims <sup>1</sup>	14,088	10,606	3,419	63

<sup>1</sup> Total number of murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.

Supplemental data concerning victims indicate that 76 percent of murder victims in 1998 were male. Persons aged 18 or older comprised the greatest percentage of victims, 88 percent. Forty-four percent of the victims fell into the 20 to 34 age group. Fifty percent of the victims for whom race was known were white, and 48 percent were black. Persons of others races comprised the remaining 2 percent of murder victims.

A total of 16,019 murder offenders were also reported according to supplemental figures. Male offenders comprised 89 percent of the total of those for whom sex and age were reported; 89 percent were persons aged 18 or older.

**Figure 2.6** **Murder**  
Percent Change from 1994

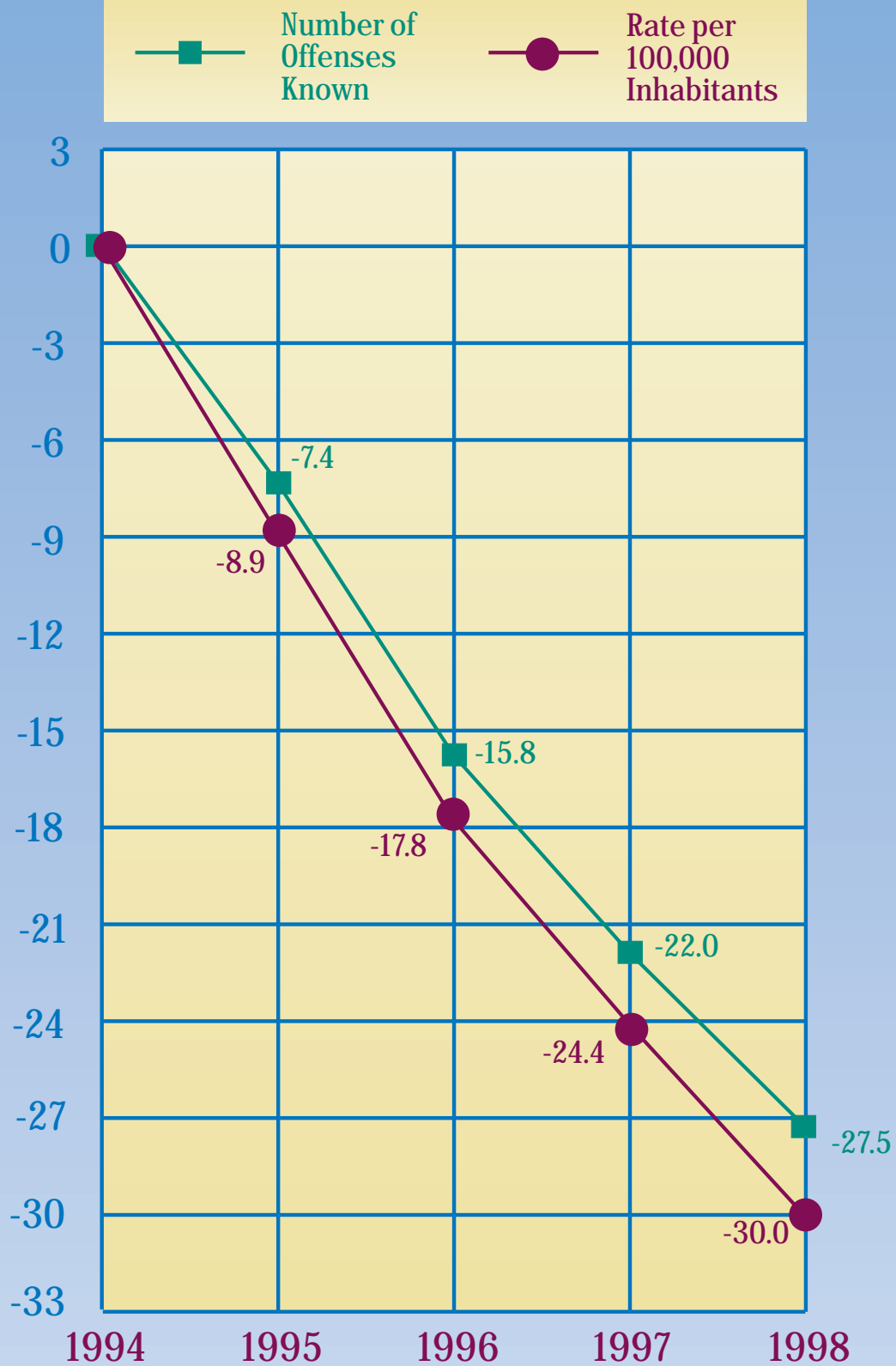


Table 2.5

**Murder Victims**

by Age, Sex, and Race, 1998

Age	Total	Sex			Race			
		Male	Female	Unknown	White	Black	Other	Unknown
Total	14,088	10,606	3,419	63	6,931	6,619	325	213
Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>	100.0	75.3	24.3	.4	49.2	47.0	2.3	1.5
Under 18 <sup>2</sup>	1,598	1,083	515	—	842	696	44	16
Under 22 <sup>2</sup>	3,763	2,933	829	1	1,710	1,941	86	26
18 and over <sup>2</sup>	12,194	9,344	2,846	4	5,983	5,829	277	105
Infant (under 1)	220	133	87	—	129	79	5	7
1 to 4	323	178	145	—	174	138	7	4
5 to 8	107	49	58	—	62	40	5	—
9 to 12	101	46	55	—	68	26	7	—
13 to 16	480	355	125	—	239	227	12	2
17 to 19	1,460	1,255	204	1	629	784	38	9
20 to 24	2,516	2,163	352	1	1,031	1,434	36	15
25 to 29	2,011	1,618	392	1	818	1,127	47	19
30 to 34	1,529	1,121	408	—	781	709	28	11
35 to 39	1,454	1,013	441	—	742	666	30	16
40 to 44	1,168	821	347	—	628	491	36	13
45 to 49	762	546	215	1	422	303	26	11
50 to 54	489	371	118	—	297	176	12	4
55 to 59	317	236	81	—	209	98	7	3
60 to 64	227	168	59	—	147	70	8	2
65 to 69	176	128	48	—	119	48	7	2
70 to 74	157	92	65	—	118	33	4	2
75 and over	295	134	161	—	212	76	6	1
Unknown	296	179	58	59	106	94	4	92

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add to total.<sup>2</sup> Does not include unknown ages.

Table 2.6

**Murder Offenders**

by Age, Sex, and Race, 1998

Age	Total	Sex			Race			
		Male	Female	Unknown	White	Black	Other	Unknown
Total	16,019	10,505	1,241	4,273	5,620	5,647	289	4,463
Percent distribution <sup>1</sup>	100.0	65.6	7.7	26.7	35.1	35.3	1.8	27.9
Under 18 <sup>2</sup>	1,169	1,069	100	—	543	562	54	10
Under 22 <sup>2</sup>	3,965	3,675	289	1	1,737	2,073	129	26
18 and over <sup>2</sup>	9,545	8,438	1,105	2	4,787	4,478	218	62
Infant (under 1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 to 4	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
5 to 8	4	2	2	—	1	3	—	—
9 to 12	17	14	3	—	5	12	—	—
13 to 16	594	530	64	—	282	276	30	6
17 to 19	2,009	1,872	137	—	910	1,018	71	10
20 to 24	2,685	2,477	207	1	1,127	1,480	56	22
25 to 29	1,627	1,425	202	—	805	774	38	10
30 to 34	1,101	946	155	—	575	501	18	7
35 to 39	890	736	154	—	512	357	13	8
40 to 44	678	561	117	—	415	241	19	3
45 to 49	423	351	72	—	246	160	14	3
50 to 54	260	222	37	1	169	84	4	3
55 to 59	165	137	28	—	105	55	5	—
60 to 64	90	79	11	—	61	27	2	—
65 to 69	58	51	7	—	36	21	1	—
70 to 74	38	35	3	—	23	15	—	—
75 and over	74	68	6	—	58	15	1	—
Unknown	5,305	998	36	4,271	290	607	17	4,391

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add to total.<sup>2</sup> Does not include unknown ages.

Persons aged 17 through 34 represented 69 percent of the offenders. Of those offenders for whom race was known, 49 percent were black and 49 percent were white. The remaining offenders were persons of other races.

Data indicate that murder among victims and offenders most often is intraracial. Data based on one victim/one offender incidents in 1998 indicate that 94 percent of black murder victims were slain by black offenders. Eighty-seven percent of white murder victims were slain by white offenders.

Males were most often the murder victims of male offenders in 1998. Both victims and offenders in 87 percent of single victim/single offender incidents were male. In contrast, data indicate that 9 out of every 10 female victims were murdered by males.

Employed in approximately 6 out of every 10 murders in the Nation in 1998, firearms were the weapon used most frequently in the commission of murder. Handguns were the firearm most often reported, accounting for 52 percent of the murder total for which weapon data were submitted. Both shotguns and rifles accounted for another 4 percent each, as did other or unknown types of firearms. Of the remaining weapon categories, knives or cutting instruments were employed in 13 percent of murders; personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) in 7 percent; blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.) in 5 percent; and other dangerous weapons (poison, explosives, etc.) in the remainder. (See Table 2.10.) A state-by-state breakdown of weapons used in connection with murder is shown in Table 20.

Table 2.7

**Victim/Offender Relationship**  
by Age, 1998

	Total	Age of offender		
		Under 18	18 and over	Unknown
Total	7,276	530	6,229	517
Under 18	851	168	649	34
18 and over	6,335	353	5,516	466
Unknown	90	9	64	17

According to supplementary data submitted for 1998, 51 percent of all murder victims knew their assailants. Of the murder victim total, 14 percent were related to the offenders, and 35 percent were acquainted with them. Strangers were identified as 13 percent of the offenders. The relationships between victims and offenders were not known for 38 percent of the murders. Husbands or boyfriends were identified as the murderers of 32 percent of female victims. Four percent of male victims were slain by wives or girlfriends.

Arguments were the most prevalent of circumstances, accounting for 32 percent of the murders during the year. Eighteen percent of murders occurred in conjunction with felonious activities such as robbery, arson, etc., while 1 percent was suspected to have been the result of some felonious activity. Table 2.14 shows murder circumstances for the past 5 years, 1994-1998.

Table 2.8

**Victim/Offender Relationship**  
by Race and Sex, 1998  
[Single Victim/Single Offender]

Race of victim	Total	Race of offender				Sex of offender		
		White	Black	Other	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
White Victims	3,728	3,205	449	39	35	3,303	390	35
Black Victims	3,309	205	3,067	6	31	2,871	407	31
Other Race Victims	158	43	20	94	1	141	16	1
Unknown Race	81	22	29	—	30	44	7	30

Sex of victim	Total	Race of offender				Sex of offender		
		White	Black	Other	Unknown	Male	Female	Unknown
Male Victims	5,133	2,281	2,703	104	45	4,464	624	45
Female Victims	2,062	1,172	833	35	22	1,851	189	22
Unknown Sex	81	22	29	—	30	44	7	30

Table 2.9

Murder, Types of Weapons Used  
Percent distribution by region, 1998

Months	Total all weapons <sup>1</sup>	Firearms	Knives or cutting instru- ments	Unknown or other dangerous weapons	Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) <sup>2</sup>
Total	100.0	64.9	13.3	15.0	6.7
Northeastern States	100.0	58.5	16.7	14.4	10.4
Midwestern States	100.0	67.0	10.5	15.7	6.9
Southern States	100.0	65.9	13.3	14.9	5.9
Western States	100.0	65.6	13.5	15.1	5.8

<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add to total.

<sup>2</sup> Pushed is included in personal weapons.

Table 2.10

Murder Victims  
Types of Weapons Used, 1994-1998

Weapons	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total	22,084	20,232	16,967	15,837	14,088
Total firearms	15,463	13,790	11,453	10,729	9,143
Handguns	12,775	11,282	9,266	8,441	7,361
Rifles	724	654	561	638	538
Shotguns	953	929	685	643	619
Other guns	19	29	20	35	16
Firearms, not stated	992	896	921	972	609
Knives or cutting instruments	2,802	2,557	2,324	2,055	1,877
Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)	912	918	792	724	741
Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) <sup>1</sup>	1,165	1,201	1,037	1,010	949
Poison	10	14	8	6	6
Explosives	10	192	15	8	10
Fire	196	166	170	140	130
Narcotics	22	22	33	37	32
Drowning	25	30	24	34	27
Strangulation	287	237	248	224	211
Asphyxiation	113	137	92	88	99
Other weapons or weapons not stated	1,079	968	771	782	863

<sup>1</sup> Pushed is included in personal weapons.

Table 2.11

Murder Victims  
Types of Weapons Used, 1998

Age	Total	Weapons										
		Firearms	Knives or cutting instru- ments	Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)	Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) <sup>1</sup>	Poison	Explosives	Fire	Narcotics	Strangu- lation	Asphyxia- tion	Other weapon or weapon not stated <sup>2</sup>
Total	14,088	9,143	1,877	741	949	6	10	130	32	211	99	890
Percent distribution <sup>3</sup>	100.0	64.9	13.3	5.3	6.7	—	.1	.9	.2	1.5	.7	6.3
Under 18 <sup>4</sup>	1,598	769	119	76	323	2	2	37	8	29	39	194
Under 22 <sup>4</sup>	3,763	2,550	317	119	359	3	2	45	12	49	45	262
18 and over <sup>4</sup>	12,194	8,239	1,722	653	609	4	8	89	23	177	56	614
Infant (under 1)	220	3	2	17	111	—	—	1	4	2	17	63
1 to 4	323	43	13	23	155	1	—	10	3	3	14	58
5 to 8	107	30	11	5	24	—	—	8	—	6	2	21
9 to 12	101	45	14	5	9	—	1	11	1	4	3	8
13 to 16	480	352	43	19	20	1	1	4	—	9	2	29
17 to 19	1,460	1,193	126	30	21	1	—	10	3	18	3	55
20 to 24	2,516	2,050	267	45	38	—	—	10	2	13	6	85
25 to 29	2,011	1,526	227	61	78	—	1	6	1	20	11	80
30 to 34	1,529	1,009	239	86	68	—	1	8	1	28	9	80
35 to 39	1,454	867	276	92	90	—	3	11	3	30	2	80
40 to 44	1,168	691	205	70	88	—	2	11	2	19	6	74
45 to 49	762	420	119	83	56	—	—	11	3	15	4	51
50 to 54	489	261	87	45	45	—	1	5	—	10	1	34
55 to 59	317	176	50	36	27	1	—	3	—	4	3	17
60 to 64	227	114	46	24	17	—	—	1	2	7	1	15
65 to 69	176	86	26	22	11	—	—	7	1	5	4	14
70 to 74	157	63	30	24	17	—	—	3	1	5	3	11
75 and over	295	79	60	42	57	2	—	6	4	8	4	33
Unknown	296	135	36	12	17	—	—	4	1	5	4	82

<sup>1</sup> Pushed is included in personal weapons.

<sup>2</sup> Includes drowning.

<sup>3</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add to total.

<sup>4</sup> Does not include unknown ages.

Table 2.12

**Murder Circumstances**  
 by Relationship<sup>1</sup>, 1998

Circumstances	Total	Husband	Wife	Mother	Father	Son	Daughter	Brother	Sister	Other family	Acquaintance	Friend	Boyfriend	Girlfriend	Neighbor	Employee	Employer	Stranger	Unknown
Total <sup>2</sup>	14,088	190	649	99	120	259	210	88	25	265	3,773	418	182	429	120	13	16	1,839	5,393
Felony type total	2,491	4	16	8	7	31	22	1	1	22	679	48	6	10	24	3	2	686	921
Rape	61	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	21	1	—	—	6	—	—	9	23
Robbery	1,232	—	1	3	1	1	—	—	—	10	236	18	3	1	11	1	2	461	483
Burglary	92	—	4	1	2	—	—	—	—	3	21	1	—	1	2	2	—	30	25
Larceny-theft	18	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	8	3
Motor vehicle theft	15	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	4
Arson	80	1	2	—	—	3	5	1	1	1	12	—	—	1	1	—	—	9	43
Prostitution and commercialized vice	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1
Other sex offenses	20	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	12	1	1	1	—	—	—	2	1
Narcotic drug laws	679	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	301	19	—	1	1	—	—	99	252
Gambling	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	5
Other - not specified	268	3	6	4	3	25	16	—	—	3	54	5	1	5	3	—	—	59	81
Suspected felony type	104	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	24	75
Other than felony type total	7,135	169	571	74	102	210	171	73	19	210	2,573	314	160	384	87	9	14	924	1,071
Romantic triangle	184	3	9	—	—	2	1	—	—	2	119	12	6	9	—	—	—	16	5
Child killed by babysitter	23	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	206	1	2	—	1	3	—	1	—	4	104	14	2	3	1	—	—	46	24
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	116	—	3	—	—	2	—	—	—	3	48	7	2	—	1	—	—	12	38
Argument over money or property	240	1	3	1	2	—	—	1	2	9	134	22	2	4	6	1	—	19	33
Other arguments	4,080	136	420	44	70	44	26	60	12	139	1,418	216	140	314	71	4	12	463	491
Gangland killings	70	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	23	—	—	—	—	—	1	19	27
Juvenile gang killings	627	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	252	1	—	—	—	—	—	160	214
Institutional killings	13	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Sniper attack	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	6
Other - not specified	1,560	28	133	29	29	158	144	11	5	51	437	42	8	54	8	4	1	186	232
Unknown	4,358	17	62	17	11	18	17	14	5	33	517	55	16	35	9	1	—	205	3,326

<sup>1</sup> Relationship is that of victim to offender.<sup>2</sup> Total murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.

Table 2.13

**Murder Circumstances  
by Weapon, 1998**

Circumstances	Total murder victims	Total firearms	Hand- guns	Rifles	Shot- guns	Other guns or type not stated	Knives or cutting instru- ments	Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)	Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.)	Poison	Pushed or thrown out window	Explo- sives	Fire	Narcotics	Drown- ing	Strangu- lation	Asphyxia- tion	Other
Total <sup>1</sup>	14,088	9,143	7,361	538	619	625	1,877	741	943	6	6	10	130	32	27	211	99	863
Felony type total	2,491	1,718	1,457	84	97	80	235	156	153	1	1	2	71	13	1	33	15	92
Rape	61	12	8	—	1	3	13	7	16	—	—	—	1	—	—	6	1	5
Robbery	1,232	891	763	43	50	35	143	86	54	—	1	—	1	1	—	16	5	34
Burglary	92	42	30	5	4	3	17	12	11	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	1	6
Larceny-theft	18	9	7	—	2	—	2	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Motor vehicle theft	15	11	11	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Arson	80	7	6	—	—	1	1	2	1	—	—	2	65	—	—	—	1	1
Prostitution and commercialized vice	14	5	3	2	—	—	—	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other sex offenses	20	3	2	—	1	—	3	3	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Narcotic drug laws	679	570	494	22	29	25	39	28	14	1	—	—	1	10	—	4	1	11
Gambling	12	10	8	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other - not specified	268	158	125	11	9	13	14	15	33	—	—	—	2	2	1	5	6	32
Suspected felony type	104	87	65	12	3	7	3	1	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	4	2	4
Other than felony type total	7,135	4,516	3,630	325	375	186	1,208	330	604	3	4	2	28	12	25	73	54	276
Romantic triangle	184	139	108	9	16	6	33	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Child killed by babysitter	23	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	206	106	83	12	8	3	47	12	26	—	1	—	1	—	—	2	—	11
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	116	86	73	3	10	—	13	7	6	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	3
Argument over money or property	240	159	121	12	15	11	46	12	14	—	—	1	1	—	—	2	—	5
Other arguments	4,080	2,534	2,051	168	225	90	883	199	268	2	2	1	14	2	4	43	18	110
Gangland killings	70	64	55	2	3	4	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Juvenile gang killings	627	592	526	35	15	16	24	6	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Institutional killings	13	1	—	—	1	—	3	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Sniper attack	16	15	7	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Other - not specified	1,560	819	605	76	82	56	154	85	262	1	1	—	12	9	21	25	36	135
Unknown	4,358	2,822	2,209	117	144	352	431	254	184	2	1	5	31	7	1	101	28	491

<sup>1</sup> Total murder victims for whom supplemental homicide data were received.



Table 2.14

**Murder Circumstances, 1994-1998**

Circumstances	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total <sup>1</sup>	22,084	20,232	16,967	15,837	14,088
Felony type total:	4,070	3,585	3,186	2,968	2,491
Rape	78	82	70	67	61
Robbery	2,076	1,872	1,618	1,509	1,232
Burglary	157	124	123	101	92
Larceny-theft	30	26	24	16	18
Motor vehicle theft	53	49	23	18	15
Arson	132	112	105	92	80
Prostitution and commercialized vice	14	9	8	7	14
Other sex offenses	41	30	27	23	20
Narcotic drug laws	1,239	1,031	843	802	679
Gambling	12	22	12	19	12
Other - not specified	238	228	333	314	268
Suspected felony type	136	113	74	153	104
Other than felony type total:	11,691	10,686	8,597	7,666	7,135
Romantic triangle	371	282	189	176	184
Child killed by babysitter	22	24	29	24	23
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	316	262	256	239	206
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	211	185	195	106	116
Argument over money or property	387	340	328	287	240
Other arguments	5,820	5,229	4,719	4,476	4,080
Gangland killings	111	88	84	86	70
Juvenile gang killings	1,157	1,158	858	783	627
Institutional killings	14	31	13	19	13
Sniper attack	2	14	8	8	16
Other - not specified	3,280	3,073	1,918	1,462	1,560
Unknown	6,187	5,848	5,110	5,050	4,358

<sup>1</sup> Total number of murder victims for whom supplemental homicide information was received.

Table 2.15

**Murder Circumstances by Victim Sex, 1998**

Circumstances	Total murder victims <sup>1</sup>	Male	Female	Unknown
Total <sup>1</sup>	14,088	10,606	3,419	63
Felony type total:	2,491	1,999	485	7
Rape	61	5	56	—
Robbery	1,232	1,058	167	7
Burglary	92	52	40	—
Larceny-theft	18	15	3	—
Motor vehicle theft	15	11	4	—
Arson	80	40	40	—
Prostitution and commercialized vice	14	4	10	—
Other sex offenses	20	11	9	—
Narcotic drug laws	679	606	73	—
Gambling	12	12	—	—
Other - not specified	268	185	83	—
Suspected felony type	104	89	15	—
Other than felony type total:	7,135	5,213	1,917	5
Romantic triangle	184	142	42	—
Child killed by babysitter	23	16	7	—
Brawl due to influence of alcohol	206	181	24	1
Brawl due to influence of narcotics	116	102	14	—
Argument over money or property	240	214	26	—
Other arguments	4,080	2,900	1,176	4
Gangland killings	70	68	2	—
Juvenile gang killings	627	597	30	—
Institutional killings	13	11	2	—
Sniper attack	16	9	7	—
Other - not specified	1,560	973	587	—
Unknown	4,358	3,305	1,002	51

<sup>1</sup> Total number of murder victims for whom supplemental homicide information was received.

## Law Enforcement Response

The crime of murder is cleared at a higher rate than is any other Crime Index offense. A 69-percent clearance rate for murder was recorded by law enforcement agencies nationwide in 1998. The highest clearance rate, 78 percent in rural counties, was followed closely by a 76-percent rate for cities with populations under 25,000. The suburban counties clearance rate for murder was 69 percent and that for the Nation's cities collectively was 68 percent. (See Table 25.)

The Northeastern States experienced a clearance rate of 78 percent, the highest among the regions. The Southern States followed with a rate of 71 percent. The Midwestern and Western States registered rates of 64 and 62 percent, respectively.

The proportion of juvenile involvement in criminal activity, when measured by clearances, was lower for murder than for any other Index crime. In 1998, persons under 18 years of age accounted for 6 percent of the murders cleared in each of three categories: law enforcement nationally, cities nationwide, and suburban counties. Juveniles accounted for 5 percent of murders cleared by law enforcement in rural counties.

In 1998, an estimated 17,450 persons were arrested for murder by law enforcement agencies nationwide. Similar to the previous year, 54 percent of the arrestees in 1998 were under 25 years of age, with the 18- to 24-year-old age group accounting for 42 percent of the total. (See Table 38.)

Males comprised the highest number of persons arrested for murder, 89 percent. Blacks comprised 53 percent of the total; whites, 44 percent; and other races, the remainder.

The murder arrest total for 1998 indicates a 3-percent decline when compared with the 1997 arrest total. The number of arrested persons aged 18 and over fell by 2 percent, and juvenile arrests declined by 12 percent. Arrests of males for murder during the same timeframe were down 5 percent. An increase of 7 percent was noted for the arrest of females; arrests of female juveniles showed an increase of 19 percent.

Long-term trends indicate the 1998 murder arrest total was 23 percent below the 1994 figure and 20 percent below the 1989 figure.

## Justifiable Homicide

Certain willful killings are classified as justifiable or excusable, based on the results of law enforcement investigation. In UCR, justifiable homicide is defined as and limited to the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty, or the killing of a felon by a private citizen during the commission of a felony. These offenses are tabulated independently and are not included in murder counts.

Supplemental data for 559 justifiable homicides were submitted by agencies in 1998. Of those 559 justifiable homicides, 365 involved law enforcement officers and 194 involved private citizens. As is the case with weapon-related murder figures overall, firearms represented the most frequent use, 95 percent. Handguns comprised 88 percent of the total firearms used, as well as 83 percent of overall weapons used. (See Tables 2.16 and 2.17.)

Table 2.16

### Justifiable Homicide

by Weapon, Law Enforcement<sup>1</sup>, 1994-1998

Year	Total	Total fire-arms	Hand-guns	Rifles	Shot-guns	Fire-arms, type not stated	Knives or other cutting instruments	Other dangerous weapons	Personal weapons
1994	462	460	404	21	29	6	—	1	1
1995	389	386	351	12	19	4	—	3	—
1996	358	351	324	10	10	7	4	1	2
1997	366	362	314	14	20	14	1	1	2
1998	365	362	318	15	17	12	1	—	2

<sup>1</sup> The killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty.

Table 2.17

### Justifiable Homicide

by Weapon, Private Citizen<sup>1</sup>, 1994-1998

Year	Total	Total fire-arms	Hand-guns	Rifles	Shot-guns	Fire-arms, type not stated	Knives or other cutting instruments	Other dangerous weapons	Personal weapons
1994	353	316	260	17	29	10	19	13	5
1995	268	230	179	18	25	8	24	10	4
1996	261	222	184	12	18	8	28	7	4
1997	280	238	197	16	14	11	28	6	8
1998	194	167	148	6	13	—	17	6	4

<sup>1</sup> The killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen.